

FrontLine Employee

Wellness, Productivity, & You!

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Web: <http://hr.dop.wa.gov/eas.html>

Assertiveness Formula

Being assertive with others is an important social skill that gets easier with practice.

Unfortunately, name calling, blaming, and words of anger often get mixed up with our attempts at being assertive. This spoils the response we want from others, making us less willing to try assertive skills. Here's one of many classic formulas to learn and teach:

I feel _____ when you _____
because _____, and I want _____.



Open Season: Think

Are you having a surgical procedure this year that will be covered by your health insurance? If so, you know the value of having the right health insurance plan. If you have a choice of plans during your employer's "open season," don't forget to consider mental health benefits (or substance abuse benefits). Will you or a family member seek treatment for a mental health, alcohol, or other drug addiction problem soon? Health insurance plans vary widely in this type of coverage. Denial naturally associated with such problems can preclude thinking about coverage.



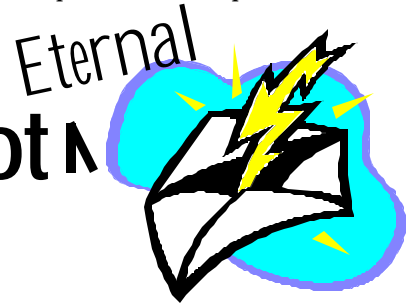
After the Fright

You're *not* crazy if you are having distressful physical or emotional symptoms in the days or weeks following a horrible event, particularly if you were harmed, or feared harm or even loss of life. Experiencing or witnessing such events can leave you with a normal but acute stress reaction that lingers after the event. Long-term lingering effects are called post-traumatic stress. Depression, sleep problems, being easily startled, anger and irritability, and other symptoms can follow a horrible event. The **Employee Advisory Service** can help.



You've Got E-mail

Think privacy — yours. Even when deleted by you, e-mails still exist in commercial e-mail servers. Hotmail.com, as one example, says that e-mail still exists until it is permanently deleted to create more space on its servers. *Then* it's really gone. With the right court order, your deleted e-mails could be retrieved. The only question is for how long. It all depends when the e-mail is permanently deleted from the server. In the court proceedings that almost led to the breakup of Microsoft, Bill Gates, was confronted by "deleted" e-mails nearly five years old! Translation: There's a lot of e-mail storage space out there!



Exercise Made Easier



I don't have enough time for exercise!" If you have used this excuse, there may be an answer for you — wearing a pedometer. A pedometer clips to your waistband and measures distance walked. "Studies show that wearing a pedometer (also frequently used by joggers and backpackers) motivates you to find ways during the day to make it click off distance. You are more likely to take the stairs, park farther from the office building, or walk outside during lunch simply because you are wearing it," says Ross Anderson, Ph.D., associate professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. So effective is the "pedometer technique" that *HealthPartners*, a Minneapolis-based managed care organization has promoted use of the device since 1999!

OxyContin®: Drug Abuse Surge



Oxycodone (brand name is OxyContin®) is a powerful painkiller with effects similar to street heroin when it is abused. OxyContin® has made national news because of crime and death associated with its theft, illegal sale, strong dosage, and abuse. OxyContin's® effects and strength of dosage are more reliable than street heroin, so there is an incentive to steal the drug. One hundred tablets of OxyContin® can be worth \$4,000 on the street. The drug is often prescribed to elderly patients, whose numbers are growing. Compliance problems (timing, dose, safeguarding medications) can increase the risk of the drug being stolen. These problems are more common among the elderly.

National Drug Intelligence Center, U.S. Dept. of Justice.

Calming Your Customers



If you think angry customers want satisfaction, you're right. But that comes second to what they want most: empathy.

Knowing how to satisfy this need will reduce your stress, make angry customers feel less intimidating, and help you tame their anger faster. Even if you disagree with the customer's view, here are three power skills to use that usually have a calming effect: 1) *Listen actively*. Focus on the customer while naturally combining head movements, facial expressions, and body language that communicate you care. 2) *Detach*. Separate your emotions from the tonality, words, and body language of the customer. Stay focused on the content of the complaint. This skill gets better with practice, keeps you from acting defensively, and helps you take less job stress home. 3) *Reflect*. Repeat the message of the customer back in your own words.

Treasure in Family Meetings



You've heard the saying, "teams must meet." What about your home team — your family? Family meetings produce many benefits: 1) a predictable model for solving problems, making plans, and deciding on major shifts in rules and boundaries; 2) teaching children that their input counts and giving them a life-long positive view of how a family works; 3) giving children a predictable place for sharing feelings about current issues in their lives, which reduces anxiety and behavioral problems; 4) providing regular opportunity for everyone to practice and develop assertiveness skills; and 5) developing a forum for individual problem solving with the input of others.

Suggested Rules for Family Meetings

- ♥ Meet regularly, not just when there is a problem.
- ♥ Let children go first when sharing feelings about any matter.
- ♥ Eliminate distractions.
- ♥ When problem-solving, focus on "what" rather than "why." Never use family meetings to target blame or attack a member.
- ♥ Identify types of decisions previously made by one person or "on the fly" and make them part of the family meeting (examples: changes in allowances, vacation plans, likes and dislikes about running the house, rules, assignment of chores, etc.).
- ♥ Meet in the same place.
- ♥ When stressful life events and occasions arise, think "family meeting."